

EXHIBIT 2

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND**

STATE OF MARYLAND; STATE OF DELAWARE; STATE OF CALIFORNIA; STATE OF COLORADO; STATE OF ARIZONA; STATE OF CONNECTICUT; DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, STATE OF HAWAI'I; STATE OF ILLINOIS; OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR *ex rel.* Andy Beshear, in his official capacity as Governor of the COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY; STATE OF MAINE; COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS; PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN; STATE OF MINNESOTA; STATE OF NEVADA; STATE OF NEW JERSEY; STATE OF NEW MEXICO; STATE OF NEW YORK; STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA; STATE OF OREGON; JOSH SHAPIRO, in his official capacity as Governor of the COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA; STATE OF RHODE ISLAND; STATE OF VERMONT; STATE OF WASHINGTON; STATE OF WISCONSIN;

Civ. No. 25-cv-01363 (DLB)

Plaintiffs,

v.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE, operating as AmeriCorps; and JENNIFER BASTRESS TAHMASEBI, in her official capacity as Interim Head of the Corporation for National and Community Service;

Defendants.

DECLARATION OF ELIZA MUNGER

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I, Eliza Munger, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am a resident of California. I am over the age of 18 and have personal knowledge of all the facts stated herein, including as based on my experience and information provided to me. If called as a witness, I could and would testify competently to the matters set forth below.

2. I am currently employed as the Director of GrizzlyCorps, which I joined in 2020 at its launch. I am also certified as a Firefighter II by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group.

3. GrizzlyCorps is an AmeriCorps fellowship program, funded through the AmeriCorps State and National program. It is administered through UC Berkeley's Center for Law, Energy & the Environment in partnership with California Volunteers, the California State Service Commission. Our program sends recent college graduates into rural communities across California to promote regenerative agri-food systems and fire and forest resilience. All GrizzlyCorps projects are designed to increase the capacity of local communities to promote resilience and response to climate needs.

4. Fellows support their hosts through a series of capacity-building projects that aim to improve the impact of their work, build community resilience, and respond to climate change. Current GrizzlyCorps Fellows are working on projects that range from community outreach, education, and research, to conservation, farmland restoration, carbon farming plans, and wildfire resilience plans, as well as a variety of other fieldwork or systems development projects. GrizzlyCorps services all focus on the promotion of regenerative agriculture and fire and forest resilience. In agricultural communities, GrizzlyCorps supports the efforts of local organizations across the state that promote regenerative agriculture practices and address food systems holistically, from land access to local food infrastructure and food security. In forested

communities, GrizzlyCorps fellows support community-led efforts in rural California to manage forests ecologically, with tools like prescribed fire, and aid in fire restoration and preparedness efforts.

5. Examples of the 37 distinct GrizzlyCorps projects include:

- a. In Trinity County, we have a GrizzlyCorps member that is building capacity for hazard mitigation planning and community outreach for the Trinity County Fire Safe Council (TCFSC). This fellow supports the maintenance of multiple planning documents relating to do reduction of wildfire and climate hazard risks in the county. This work is critical to local forest and fire resilience for a county that has seen repeated catastrophic wildfires in the last two decades.
- b. In Mendocino County, one of our members is primarily responsible for the Mendocino County Fire Safe Council's fire science education program that is delivered to over 800 Mendocino County. That member is helping the Fire Safe Council's all-volunteer Mendocino County Prescribed Burn Association find ways to achieve consistent processes and deliver increased scale. The member works with many interested landowners and delves into roadblocks and how the Fire Safe Council can provide more opportunities and resources for increasing the scale of prescribed fire in the county.
- c. In Los Angeles County, GrizzlyCorps has two members serving to assist the newly formed Santa Monica Mountains Regional Fire Safe Council. This Fire Safe Council aims to connect residents and organizations working toward wildfire mitigation. GrizzlyCorps members are providing support in

creating and delivering educational workshops, webinars, and community presentations about home hardening, defensible space, and Firewise USA.

6. On January 10, 2025, GrizzlyCorps received a request from California Volunteers for an AmeriCorps Emergency Response Deployment for the Palisades and Eaton fires in Los Angeles. GrizzlyCorps deployed two members located in Los Angeles to help the YMCA to provide critical support to those impacted by the Southern California fires. Local YMCA centers became temporary evacuation sites, offering shelter, showers and basic amenities.

7. All GrizzlyCorps members are employees of UC Berkeley. Overall, all GrizzlyCorps members follow the same 4-stage intervention process to implement their service:

- a. Gap assessment where members identify capacity building goals;
- b. Research, planning, and implementation projects to address these goals;
- c. Volunteer recruitment activities to engage the community in efforts;
- d. Transitioning of knowledge to community members.

8. GrizzlyCorps Fellows receive at least 90 hours of core training, which includes a full week of orientation and subject-matter training relevant for projects over the course of their 11-month tenure (*i.e.*, regenerative agriculture, fire ecology, resilient food-systems, forestry, environmental policy).

9. On or about 5:23 PM on Sunday April 27, 2025, GrizzlyCorps received a notification from California Volunteers, the State of California agency that runs the AmeriCorps program in California, that AmeriCorps had terminated the grants to California Volunteers that fund GrizzlyCorps as a subgrantee and explicitly directed California Volunteers to terminate the GrizzlyCorps program along with other AmeriCorps programs in California. The federal

termination letter directed California Volunteers to immediately stop all award and member activities. California Volunteers, in turn, directed GrizzlyCorps to pause all activities based on the federal termination letter.

10. The termination notices, which were sent without any warning, have caused significant confusion and chaos, uprooting the lives of members and key community services for California. GrizzlyCorps AmeriCorps members have contacted me with questions and concerns regarding their remaining months within the program, including whether they will be able to complete their service year and whether they will be paid. Many members live paycheck to paycheck off their modest AmeriCorps stipend, and any pause in pay would be financially disruptive. For example, members asked whether they would be able to afford rent. They have also expressed concern over if and when they would receive an education award, which is awarded at the completion of a term of service. Members also have expressed concern over if they will still be eligible for benefits available to AmeriCorps members such as student loan forbearance, food stamps, and health care.

11. GrizzlyCorps staff are similarly worried about their jobs. I employ three full time staff and one student assistant, all who are funded through GrizzlyCorps. When we were first informed of the AmeriCorps departmental staff layoffs, one of my staff asked if she should start looking for a part-time job to ensure she could pay for rent if the program were to be terminated. Based on my knowledge of the members' financial circumstances, in the event of sudden termination of income and benefits, members will require financial assistance to support their basic needs, including housing and meals.

12. Termination of these AmeriCorps programs has a significant impact on California.

- a. California has stringent climate reduction requirements, aiming for substantial greenhouse gas emission reductions. Key targets include reaching 1990 levels by 2020, reducing emissions by 40% below 1990 levels by 2030, and achieving 80% below 1990 levels by 2050. Additionally, the state aims for carbon neutrality by 2045, requiring an 85% reduction in anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions below 1990 levels by that date. All of these goals are assisted by GrizzlyCorps's projects, and California will face greater challenges meeting them in the face of GrizzlyCorps's grant termination.
- b. California laws related to wildfire and forest resilience include requirements for defensible space around homes and buildings, community plans for escape routes and emergency response, promotion of prescribed burns and other forms of fuel reduction, along with large budget allocations for fire prevention and response. GrizzlyCorps projects and members work to help the state meet these goals and requirements, including, for example, mapping emergency escape routes. If the grant termination is allowed to stand, either the work GrizzlyCorps does to help California meet the requirements of these laws will not get done, or the state will need to do it at its own expense.
- c. More broadly, GrizzlyCorps is designed to advance a variety of goals that benefit the State of California and its residents, including rural outreach, regenerative agriculture, preservation of farmland, protection of groundwater, worker training, carbon sequestration, greenhouse gas

emission reduction, climate resilience, reduction of wildfire risk, improved forest resilience, volunteerism, landowner education for resilience, and increased educational opportunity. These goals are important to avoid environmental and other harms imposed on California and its residents; they are all undermined by the grant termination. Again, if the grant termination is allowed to stand, either the work GrizzlyCorps does to help California meet these goals will not get done, or the state will need to do it at its own expense.

- d. AmeriCorps Members: These terminations affected a total of 42 members in California. Under the grant, these members receive \$2750 monthly stipends, before taxes. They also receive other benefits such as free or reduced cost housing, training stipends, food stamp eligibility, and MediCal eligibility. And, particularly in the final May-June months of the program, fellows receive work transition support, such as resume building, career panels, interview practice, and other networking opportunities. This transition support is an essential part of GrizzlyCorps program, and would not be provided to any of our members that will be prematurely exited from the program *absent relief from this Court.*
- e. AmeriCorps-Funded Staff: These terminations affected a total of four full time GrizzlyCorps staff in California. GrizzlyCorps was currently hiring for my replacement, the Director of GrizzlyCorps, as I had planned to leave the program at the end of May for graduate school. We are now uncertain if we can hire for my replacement due to the loss of funding, leaving a huge

institutional knowledge gap and lack of leadership for the program.

GrizzlyCorps will likely be unable to retain all of our staff members.

- f. **Programs Directly Supporting Non-Profits and Other Organizations:** As a result of the termination notice, GrizzlyCorps immediately directed its 45 members (also referred to as “fellows”) to pause work. This program provided services to the following sites: Audubon Canyon Ranch, Blodgett Forest Research Station (Berkeley Forests), Butte County Resource Conservation District (BCRCD), UCANR California Institute for Water Resources, Coarsegold Resource Conservation District, Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF), Eastern Madera County Fire Safe Council, F.I.R.E. Foundry - Marin County Fire Department, Farm to Pantry, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, University of California Berkeley Natural Reserve, Humboldt County Resource Conservation District, Lake County Resource Conservation District, Lost Sierra Food Project, Marin Municipal Water District, Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, Pit River Tribe, Resource Conservation District of Greater San Diego County, Resource Conservation District of Tehama County, Santa Monica Mountains Regional Fire Safe Council, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, South Coast Research & Extension Center, Sustainable Conservation, The Watershed Research and Training Center, Tribal EcoRestoration Alliance, Trinity County Fire Safe Council, Trinity County Resource Conservation District, UC Hopland Research and Extension Center, UCCE Santa Clara County, Upper Salinas - Las Tablas

Resource Conservation District, Western Shasta Resource Conservation District, White Buffalo Land Trust, and Wild Farm Alliance. Our estimate of the market value of these services is \$2.5 million.

- g. Each of these sites has a mission that advances one or more of the goals relating to climate harm reduction or wildfire and forest resilience that are discussed above. Many are staffed by employees paid at state expense, whose work is supplemented and assisted by GrizzlyCorps's boots on the ground. If the grant termination stands, California's climate and wildfire-related interests will suffer, or California will need to compensate for the loss of GrizzlyCorps's members at its own expense.

13. The termination notice has placed the future of GrizzlyCorps in jeopardy. These harms include:

- a. **Drawdown Approval Delays:** We do not know if we will be reimbursed for program expenses that predated the grant termination. Significant delays in the reimbursement of program expenses would impact the entire budget of the Center for Law, Energy & Environment, a small unit within UC Berkeley that operates on its own budget.
- b. **Grant Review and Approval:**
 - i. **Formula Grants:** The 2025 guidance stated that AmeriCorps will allocate the statutory minimum of one-half percent (0.5 percent) of the total allocation to each state and then use a population-based formula to allocate any remaining unallocated funds to states eligible to receive more than the minimum. To allocate the 2025

Formula funds, the State Commission will review applications by potential grantees (including those that were not selected as part of the Competitive process) and make recommendations to AmeriCorps no later than June. Approved grants are then submitted to AmeriCorps for final approval in June to ensure a start date so there is no gap for recurring programs (the grant period is August-July).

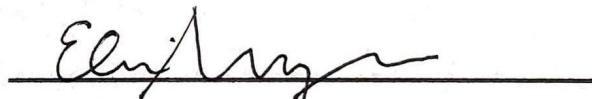
ii. **Delays and Chilling Effect on Recruitment.** Due to the current reductions in AmeriCorps staff, unexpected termination notices, and uncertainty about future funding, we are unable to realistically plan for future operations, including securing philanthropic assistance for any match requirements. Our programs need to advertise for members positions in May to ensure sufficient staffing and member enrollment to begin in August. The recent news about termination of AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps NCCC and AmeriCorps VISTA members will certainly have a chilling effect for recruitment of prospective members, since AmeriCorps will not be viewed as a reliable or safe source for service opportunities. Successful recruitment of potential members and service sites for the next grant year is in peril. Our programs cannot continue if we do not have sufficient members to provide the services.

c. **National Service Trust Transaction Delays:** We have a significant number of members who rely on the National Service Trust to process tuition

payments, educational loan payments, and forbearance interest payments when service concludes. As a result of the massive number of members who were recently terminated, and due to the reduced number of staff who are processing these transactions, we expect significant delays in executing these transactions. The financial impact of these delays could destroy a member's credit worthiness and place them in need of financial assistance by the State.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on 5/5/25, at 9:15 AM.



Eliza Munger
Director
GrizzlyCorps